

DATELINE #57 NEW YORK CITY  
SIDNEY PAUL

JANUARY 21, 1976

WALKING ON WATER  
(VOICED PIECE AND INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

AND NOW, THE VOICE OF AMERICA PRESENTS ...DATELINE...  
...  
ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF PROGRAMS ABOUT PEOPLE AND  
PLACES IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, OUR DATELINE IS  
NEW YORK CITY WHERE SIDNEY PAUL WAS OUT IN A TUGBOAT  
RECENTLY, WATCHING A MAN WALK ON THE WATER OF THE HUDSON  
RIVER AND THEN SENDING THIS REPORT:

THE DREAM OF MILLIONS OF COMMUTERS BETWEEN NEW JERSEY  
AND NEW YORK TODAY TOOK ON SOME SEMBLANCE OF REALITY.  
UNITED STATES ARMY SERGEANT WALTER ROBINSON NEARLY  
COMPLETE A ONE POINT SIX KILOMETER (ONE MILE) CROSSING  
OF THE HUDSON RIVER, WALKING ON THE SURFACE IN WHAT HE  
CALLS HIS "WATER SHOES." THERE WERE MASSIVE PIECES OF  
ICE IN THE RIVER THAT COULD HAVE PUNCTURED HIS "SHOES"  
-- SO HE STOPPED ABOUT NINETY METERS (ONE HUNDRED YARDS)  
SHORT OF HIS GOAL.

SERGEANT ROBINSON IS A CARPENTER IN THE ARMY, AND  
AN INVENTOR IN PRIVATE LIFE. HE ATTEMPTED TO CROSS THE  
HUDSON TO PUBLICIZE HIS INVENTION WHICH HE IS CURRENTLY  
EXHIBITING AT NEW YORK CITY'S NATIONAL BOAT SHOW. HE  
CLAIMS THE INVENTION CAN BE USED IN THREE WAYS -- FOR  
RECREATION, IN INDUSTRY -- SUCH AS IN FIGHTING OIL  
SLICKS -- AND IN THE MILITARY BECAUSE MACHINE GUNS CAN  
EVEN BE FIRED FROM ATOP THE "SHOES."

NARR: THE SERGEANT CALLS HIS BRAIN CHILD "WATER SHOES" -- BUT  
(CONT'D) IT LOOKS LIKE A RAFT. IT CONSISTS OF TWO FIBERGLASS AIR-  
FILLED MATTRESSES -- EACH AS LONG AS A MAN'S BODY AND  
AS WIDE AS HIS SHOULDERS. THE "SHOES" ARE STRAPPED  
TOGETHER SIDE BY SIDE, AND TOPPED BY COTTON POLYESTER  
COVERS. TWO ALUMINUM RODS SEWN LENGTHWISE IN EACH  
MATTRESS PREVENT THE "SHOES" FROM BUCKLING. STANDING  
ON TOP OF THIS -- WITH HIS FEET ABSOLUTELY FREE -- SERGEANT  
ROBINSON PROPELLED HIMSELF WITH TWO ALUMINUM OARS, EACH  
OF WHICH HAD A SPECIAL GRIP COVERING THE FOREARM. TOTAL  
WEIGHT OF THE "SHOES" WAS ABOUT ELEVEN KILOGRAMS (TWENTY-  
FIVE POUNDS).

HE STARTED ON THE NEW JERSEY SIDE OF THE HUDSON, WITH  
THREE PEOPLE FOLLOWING HIM IN A SMALL MOTOR BOAT. MOVING  
DOWNSTREAM -- IN SUB-FREEZING WEATHER-- SERGEANT ROBINSON  
BUCKED A SLIGHT CURRENT. FOR ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES,  
HE DID WELL -- EVEN PULLING OVER TO THE TUGBOAT OCCASIONALLY  
AND JOKING WITH REPORTERS. BUT, SUDDENLY, ABOUT FIFTEEN  
MINUTES FROM HIS NEW YORK LANDING, MASSIVE ICE FLOES  
APPEARED. HE SKIRTED AROUND THEM AND DROPPED BACK BEHIND  
THE TUGBOAT FOR SAFETY. FINALLY, HE DECIDED HE HAD PROVED  
HIS POINT -- AND HEAVED HIMSELF INTO THE MOTOR BOAT.

SERGEANT ROBINSON WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED IN HIS PERFORMANCE.  
HE REMINDED REPORTERS THAT HE ALREADY HOLDS A WORLD RECORD  
ON HIS "SHOES"-- SOME YEARS AGO HE CROSSED THE PANAMA  
CANAL -- FROM THE PACIFIC TO THE ATLANTIC SIDE -- A  
DISTANCE OF EIGHTY-NINE KILOMETERS (FIFTY-SIX MILES).

NARR: WE ASKED SERGEANT ROBINSON IF HE WAS WORKING ON ANY OTHER

(CONT'D)

INVENTIONS:

TAPE: ACTUALITY -- ROBINSON

"WE'RE ALSO WORKING ON AN 'ORNATHOPTER,' WHICH IS A BIRD-LIKE APPARATUS, A MECHANICAL BIRD -- IN OTHER WORDS, THE WINGS FLAP JUST LIKE A BIRD -- AND YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE OFF OF FLAT LAND AND LAND ON FLAT LAND -- THAT'S ONE PERSON USING JUST HIS BODY MUSCLES."

NARR: IF THE SERGEANT EVER DEMONSTRATES HIS "ORNATHOPTER" AT THE NEW YORK AIR SHOW, YOUR REPORTER WILL BE STANDING BY.

ANNCR: THE STORY OF A MAN WHO ALREADY CAN WALK ON WATER AND IS MAKING PLANS TO FLY LIKE A BIRD. YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO DATELINE ...ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF VOICE OF AMERICA PROGRAMS REPORTING ON PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. NEXT WEEK (AT THIS TIME) ANOTHER DATELINE FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE UNITED STATES.  
THIS IS -----.

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RC/CAK